

<b>Date: 23 April 1994</b> <b>Opposition: West Ham United</b> <b>Competition: League</b>	British Soccer Wk		Sunday Times	23 April 1994
	Observer			

**BRITISH SOCCER WEEK**

**Late Ian Rush header makes West Ham pay**

Ian Rush's predatory instincts sealed the points for Liverpool with a goal three minutes from time.

The ever-watchful Rush seized on a poor back pass from West Ham defender Tony Gale, took the ball past goalkeeper Ludek Miklosko and rolled it into the net.

Rush had been uncharacteristically sluggish after 31 minutes when Don Hutchison found him just a few yards out but he failed to control it and pushed the ball to a relieved Miklosko.

After 65 minutes he had a free header from a Jamie Redknapp cross but put it over the top.

West Ham hade made a dream start with Martin Allen putting them ahead in the first minute.

Trevor Morley headed down for Matt Holmes who put Allen clear to chip over the advancing David James.

Liverpool were back on terms after 14 minutes when Steve Nicol crossed to the far post, John Barnes put it back inside and Robbie Fowler drove home.

After that there were three chances at both ends, with James saving from former Liverpool defender David Burrows and a Barnes effort that Miklosko dropped but managed to gather at the second attempt.

But Rush timed it just right for Liverpool - and Hutchison should have made it 3-1 in injury time but allowed Burrows to get back and block his effort.

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## THE SUNDAY TIMES

Rush rescues ageing Liverpool

West Ham 1, Liverpool 2

West Ham 1 (Allen 1)

Liverpool 2 (Fowler 14, Rush 87)

(4-4-2): Miklosko; Breacker, Gale, Potts, Burrows; M Rush, Allen, Marsh, Bishop (Chapman 72min); Holmes, Morley.

(4-4-2): James; Harkness, Nicol, Ruddock, Dicks; Hutchison, Redknapp, Clough, Barnes; I Rush, Fowler.

1-0 Morley headed down a through ball, Holmes set up Allen to lob the goalkeeper.

1-1 Nicol crossed, Barnes knocked the ball back, Fowler shot in.

1-2 Gale's back-pass failed to reach Miklosko, and Rush nipped in to score.

Booked: Allen (52min); Harkness (55min); Marsh (89min).

Weather: fine. Ground: firm. Referee: S Lodge (Barnsley).

THESE are the dying days of the old Liverpool. Next Saturday, the fans will stand on the Kop for the last time before it is demolished. Several players, too, may soon pass into Anfield history: Grobbelaar, Nicol, Whelan, Walters, Stewart and, after only one season, Clough, even though he played for 90 minutes here.

Then there is Rush, who scored the late winner, after a dreadful second half all round, as Gale and Miklosko fluffed a simple back pass.

Because Rush is not a broad-beamed bustler, it is easy to forget that he is the best British centre-forward since 1945. But Rush will be 33 in October, and he played like it, with two bad misses before his goal one a shot, one a header.

Liverpool were best served by young Redknapp, with his energy and short-passing, and by a sound defence. Barnes is fitter and sharper these days, although he will never be the Barnes of old, and explode past people. James, also, was a pleasant surprise, with some alert stops, sound handling and no hair-brained moments.

Roy Evans, Liverpool's latest manager, has now been in charge of the team for 14 matches and he secured his first away win, his fifth win overall. It is not sensational progress, but the truth is that whatever happens this season is incidental.

Evans had, as seems usual, six men indisposed. He agreed that Liverpool did not deserve to qualify for Europe, that they needed at least "one or two new faces". He must know how far this Liverpool side is from the great Anfield teams of the Shankly, Paisley and Dalglish eras.

Now that the nouveau riche of Blackburn and Newcastle have scented success, Liverpool's road back to the top will be doubly difficult.

Whether West Ham can raise their aspirations that far up the Premier League table is doubtful. There are two views of the Hammers' season one optimistic, the other pessimistic.

The optimists say that West Ham have stayed up comfortably, that they had a Cup run, and that Upton Park is sparkling these days, with all the bitterness surrounding the bond scheme long forgotten.

The pessimists, and there is never a shortage of fanzine sellers outside the ground, say that West Ham have the support but not the courage to challenge Tottenham and Arsenal; that the team is a cosy conspiracy run by Messrs Bonds and Redknapp senior, who are two smashing chaps but hardly revolutionaries; that the team is as likely to get worse as it is to improve from here on.

After 60 seconds or so, the optimists had it. West Ham scored a delightful goal after a four-man break, climaxed when Allen lobbed James. They went on to enjoy a bright opening, with Allen, Morley and Holmes prominent; then they got lost.

Let us be optimistic. Those Hammers were 19th and going down again when they traded Dicks for Marsh and Burrows, plus a few pence to fund the purchase of Chapman. It was good business the faithful admitted as much by applauding Dicks. Not for him the Paul Ince welcome-home treatment.

Unfortunately Dicks, like most of the Liverpool team, was unexceptional. You have to say the same about young Fowler, even though he successfully shot the equaliser with rare venom.

## The Observer

Rush still quick enough

West Ham United1

Allen 1

Liverpool 2

Fowler 14, Rush 87

Att: 26,096

ROY EVANS is in every respect a throw-back to the old-style football manager - no gold bracelets or holiday homes in the sun but a simple, pragmatic approach to how the game should be played.

That pragmatism was very much in evidence in East London as Liverpool took a trip down memory lane. It was all there - enthusiastic travelling support which gave West Ham their second-largest crowd of the season, football played to the feet and a late winner from Rush.

The fact that Rush is still at Liverpool is due to Evans's ability to blend youth with experience. Under Souness there was discontent and Liverpool lost their way a little as senior players such as Welland were told their services were not needed any longer.

Evans, though, knows that old heads can bring dividends. He had the chance to let Rush go but didn't take it. 'They don't come any better than Ian Rush,' Evans said. 'You write him off at your peril.'

Against West Ham, it would have been very easy to write Rush off. Throughout the afternoon he looked a yard slower and a little less willing and, under those circumstances, another manager might have thought about selling the Welsh striker.

'There was interest in Ian but he said he wanted to end his playing days with Liverpool,' Evans added.

The manager accommodated his striker's wish and, after 87 minutes of trying but not quite succeeding - including a missed chance from inside the six-yard box - Rush capitalised on a dreadful mistake by Gale to snatch the winner when both sides looked as though they had settled for a draw.

'I thought it should have been a draw,' said Billy Bonds, the West Ham manager. 'But Rush is always likely to grab a late goal. He is like a predator. He's lived off that sort of situation all his career.'

Rush was not the only one who demonstrated the art of opportunism. West Ham's Allen gave his side the lead after 54 seconds of play following a move involving six men and eight passes.

So stunned was the Liverpool defence at West Ham's dexterity and skill that James, the goalkeeper, was caught somewhere between the goal-line and the edge of the area. He realised he was hopelessly out of position when Allen lobbed the ball over his head to give West Ham the lead.

The equaliser came in the 14th minute when a cross from Nicol found Barnes, whose shot came back off the woodwork for Fowler to force the ball over the line. Evans will know that he did not deserve his first away victory as manager, just as he knows that his present Liverpool side are a long way short of the high standards we have come to expect of them.

'It's about results,' said Evans. 'But we don't deserve to be in Europe next year and we will need to get one or two new faces.' He went on to point out that another old head, Barnes, will very much be part of his future plans. 'He's never going to be the player he was but Barnes still has something to offer,' said Evans.

His approach to the present senior Liverpool players is the kind of pragmatism that gets the right results - even against all the odds.